

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 ADDIS 5527

LIMDIS/NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET US

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

1. THIS MESSAGE SEEKS TO EXAMINE THE MAIN ELEMENTS IN THE US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP, AND TO POSE SOME POLICY ISSUES AND OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS. ITS PURPOSE IS TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THE DEPT WITH A VIEW TO REACHING MUTUALLY AGREED CONCLUSIONS. THE TIME FRAME IS THE NEXT ONE OR TWO YEARS.

2. THE FLUIDITY OF THE SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA DURING THE PAST YEAR HAS MADE IT VERY DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH FIXED PARAMETERS FOR US POLICIES, AND IT IS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS DIFFICULT NOW. IN ORDER TO REDUCE TO MANAGEABLE SIZE AN EXAMINATION OF THIS KIND WE HAVE ARBITRARILY ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS:

A. THAT THE GOVERNMENT IN ADDIS (THE PRESENT DIRG OR A SUCCESSOR) REMAINS IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL, THAT THE PORTS IN ERITREA STAY IN GOE HANDS, AND THAT PUBLIC ORDER DOES NOT DETERIORATE SIGNIFICANTLY.

B. THAT THE GOE REFRAINS FROM EXTREME ACTIONS (KILLING POLITICAL
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PRISONERS, FOR INSTANCE) THAT WOULD FORCE A RE-EXAMINATION OF

PRESENT US POLICY TOWARD THE GOE.

C. THAT THE PRESENT GOE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USG AND TOWARD US PROGRAMS IN-COUNTRY (AID, MAAG, USIS, PC, ETC.) DOES NOT CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY FOR THE WORSE.

3. THE DEPT WILL REALIZE THAT THESE ASSUMPTIONS ARE ADOPTED FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE, AND THAT THEY DO NOT REPRESENT EMBASSY JUDGEMENTS OF LIKELIHOOD OR PROBABILITY. DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS COULD EASILY -- AND RATIONALLY -- BE CHOSEN, BUT WOULD LEAD TO POLICY ISSUES MORE HYPOTHETICAL THAN THOSE WE WISH TO EXAMINE NOW.

4. U.S. OBJECTIVES.

A. TO PRESERVE US TIES AND INFLUENCE, INCLUDING ACCESS TO MILITARILY-IMPORTANT AREAS (PORTS, AIRFIELDS, A COMMO STATION, OVERFLIGHTS), AND TO DENY THOSE AREAS TO UNFRIENDLY POWERS;

B. TO PRESERVE THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF ETHIOPIA.

5. THESE OBJECTIVES HAVE REMAINED ROUGHLY CONSTANT FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THEY ARE THE PRODUCT OF US INTERESTS IN THE STABILITY OF THE REGION, IN ITS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE IN RELATION TO THE RED SEA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND IN OUR BEING SEEN BY AFRICAN AND OTHER NATIONS AS A RELIABLE AND FLEXIBLE POWER ABLE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS EVEN WITH A MODERNIZING ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THE CHANGING SITUATION HAS ERODED OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES FULLY, AND WE NEED TO MAKE A REALISTIC REASSESSMENT OF WHAT IS ACHIEVABLE. OUR BASIC INTERESTS ARE STILL CONSIDERABLE BUT OUR CAPABILITIES HAVE DIMINISHED.

6. INFLUENCE, ACCESS, AND DENIAL (OBJECTIVE A)

A. THE POLICIES AND THE STYLE OF OPERATION OF THE EPMG HAVE BEGUN TO EMERGE MORE CLEARLY IN RECENT MONTHS. XENOPHOBIA, SECRETIVENESS, AND RESISTANCE TO ANYBODY'S ADVICE -- NOTICEABLE AS HISTORICAL TRAITS DURING THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT -- HAVE
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INTENSIFIED. THE DRIVE FOR TRANSFORMATION OF THE WHOLE SOCIETY IN THE NAME OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM IS VERY STRONG AND THE GOE WILL PROBABLY WISH TO DEMINISH ALL OUTSIDE INFLUENCES, INCLUDING THE US PRESENCE, AS IT TRIES TO ACHIEVE FUNDAMENTAL AND FAR-REACHING INTERNAL CHANGES. THESE CHANGES ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE BASED ENTIRELY ON ANY PARTICULAR FOREIGN MODEL. THERE ARE ALREADY APPARENT SOME HOPEFUL SIGNS THAT THE INITIAL IDEOLOGICAL EXTREMISM CAN GIVE WAY TO PRAGMATIC FACTORS AT LEAST IN SOME

CASES (EXEMPTION OF LARGE AREAS FROM LAND REFORM DURING THE PRESENT CROP SEASON; CAUTIOUS APPLICATION OF NATIONALIZATION IN SOME FOREIGN ENTERPRISES WHERE PRODUCTION WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPAIRED; CURBING THE EXTREME DEMANDS OF TRADE UNIONS IN SOME CASES WHERE INTERFERENCE WITH FOREIGN MANAGEMENT WOULD HAVE CAUSED THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN PROJECTS). WE SHOULD EXPECT THAT THE US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP WILL BE AN UNEASY ONE. SOCIALIST IDEAS AND RHETORIC, EVEN IF TEMPERED BY PRAGMATISM, WILL PROBABLY REMAIN THE BASIC GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND THE APPROPRIATE ROLES FOR US PROGRAMS AND PERSONNEL (PEACE CORPS, AID TECHNICIANS AND EVEN MAAG ADVISERS) MAY BE INCREASINGLY CIRCUMSCRIBED BY SOCIALIST IDEOLOGICAL FACTORS.

B. IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WE THINK THAT THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WILL BE AN EFFORT BY THE GOE TO HAVE SOMEWHAT CLOSER RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, BUT PROBABLY NOT TO A DEGREE THAT COMPROMISES THE PRAGMATIC NON-ALIGNMENT THAT THE GOE SEEKS. THE EMPEROR HAD ALREADY BROUGHT THE GOE TOWARD CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST WORLD, AND TOWARD A FIRM THIRD WORLD STANCE; THE PMAC WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE MODEST STEPS IN THAT DIRECTION. BUT EXCEPT AS GOE LEADERS PERCEIVE WESTERN INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS AS HAMPERING THE CHANGES THEY WANT TO MAKE WITHIN THEIR OWN SOCIETY, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GOE WILL WISH TO RETAIN ROUGHLY THE CURRENT LEVEL OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE US. AND THE US, AS BY FAR THE MAJOR SOURCE OF MILITARY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT, WILL CONTINUE, WHETHER EITHER OF US LIKES IT OR NOT, TO BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE GOE. AS LONG AS THE US-ETHIOPIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP REMAINS VAIABLE, WE DOUBT THAT ANY EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY, THE PRC, OR ANY WESTERN EUROPEAN POWER IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE THAN A MINOR SUPPLIER OF ARMS.

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C. THUS IN THESE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS UNREALISTIC FOR US TO HOPE FOR GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT WE WILL HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE ON THE GOE EITHER IN INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. AND IT IS EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE ANY MORE MILITARY ACCESS THAN WE NOW HAVE, WHICH EXCEPT FOR A 30-MAN REMNANT AT KAGNEW STATION IS LARGELY FOR BILATERAL PURPOSES. EVEN IN THE EMPEROR'S TIME THE BASING OF P-3 AIRCRAFT IN ETHIOPIA FOR INDIAN OCEAN SURVEILLANCE WOULD HAVE ENTAILED COSTS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE USG, AND IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT THE PMAC, OR ANY SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT, WOULD PERMIT ANY SIMILAR US BASING FOR LESS. THE GOE'S NON-ALIGNED STANCE WOULD PRECLUDE OUR USE OF ETHIOPIA AS A STAGING BASE IN THE EVENT OF A WAR IN THE AREA (THIS CONCEPT IS STILL CONTAINED

IN DOD PLANS), AT LEAST WITHOUT AN EXHORBITANT PRICE TAG THAT WOULD TAKE A VERY LONG TIME TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOE AND WITH OUR CONGRESS. THE PROSPECTS FOR DENYING ACCESS TO PORTS AND AIRFIELDS BY HOSTILE POWERS SEEM CONSIDERABLY BETTER, BUT A CHANGE IN THE CHOSEN ASSUMPTIONS IN THIS PAPER (ERITREAN ACHIEVEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE, INCLUDING ITS TWO PORTS) WOULD SHARPLY CHANGE THE ODDS.

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7. TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE (OBJECTIVE B)

A. GIVEN OUR ASSUMPTIONS, THE MAIN THREAT TO THIS OBJECTIVE IS CLEARLY THE ERITREAN SITUATION. NO GOVERNMENT IN ADDIS CAN AGREE TO ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE, EVEN IF A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT WOULD GIVE ADDIS CLEAR ACCESS TO ONE OR BOTH OF THE PORTS THAT NOW ARE WITHIN ERITREA'S BOUNDARIES. SOME ISSUES REGARDING ERITREA ARE DISCUSSED BELOW. ANOTHER THREAT (ONE WE THINK NOW LIKELY) WOULD BE A SOMALI ATTEMPT TO SEIZE AREAS OF ETHIOPIA THAT THEY HAVE CLAIMED FOR MANY YEARS, BUT THIS POSSIBILITY IS OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF OUR ASSUMPTIONS.

8. IT MUST BE RE-EMPHASIZED THAT THE ABOVE COMBINATION OF ASSUMPTIONS AND PROJECTIONS COULD VERY EASILY BE UPSET BY ANY OF A LARGE NUMBER OF NEW FACTORS. A SOMALI ATTACK THIS SUMMER

(UNLIKELY BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE) COULD CAUSE ETHIOPIAN LOSSES THAT WOULD RESULT IN THE GOE BLAMING THE USG FOR NOT HAVING SUPPLIED THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT THAT THE GOE HAS BEEN REQUESTING FOR OVER A YEAR; THERE WOULD BE DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES WITHIN THE DIRG, AS WELL AS FOR THE USRELATIONSHIP. ANY CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF DJIBOUTI AND THE TFAI (THREATENED, BUT PROBABLY NOT SERIOUSLY, BY SOME ARAB AND SOMALI PRESSURES FOR LIBERATION FROM FRENCH SECRET

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COLONIALISM) COULD SET OFF A MILITARY CHAIN-REACTION INVOLVING GOE, SOMALIA, THE AFAR TRIBAL MINORITY IN ETHIOPIA, AND PROBABLY ERITREA. AND PERHAPS MORE LIKELY THAN ANY OTHER "WORST CASE" SCENARIO, THERE COULD BE A DISINTEGRATION OF THE WHOLE CUMBERSOME AND FACTION-RIDDEN DIRG APPARATUS, WITH TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES. NEVERTHELESS, WE SHALL EXAMINE BELOW A MANAGEABLE SET OF CURRENT AND UPCOMING POLICY ISSUES IN THE LIGHT OF OUR CHOSEN ASSUMPTIONS.

9. POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES. WE CONCENTRATE BELOW ON THE MOST IMPORTANT, AND IN SOME CASES THE MOST IMMEDIATE, ISSUES ON WHICH WE SEEK GUIDANCE AND A MEETING OF MINDS WITH THE DEPT.

A. ERITREA. DESPITE URGING BY A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO ETHIOPIA AND SUPPORTIVE OF ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY (INCLUDING EASTERN EUROPEAN), THE GOE HAS YET TO TAKE A FORTHCOMING PUBLIC STANCE IN FAVOR OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ELF/PLF. THE ELF CONTINUES TO INSIST ON INDEPENDENCE AS A PRECONDITION FOR ANY TALKS, AND CONTINUES TO GET SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY AND CASH SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL ARAB COUNTRIES. SUDAN'S MEDIATION OFFER PROBABLY HOLDS THE BEST LONG-RANGE HOPE FOR GETTING TALKS STARTED, BUT SUDAN'S APPARENT ACQUIESCENCE IN ARMS TRANSIT THROUGH ITS TERRITORY DAMAGES ITS CLAIMS OF IMPARTIALITY, AT LEAST IN GOE EYES. IN ERITREA, GOE MILITARY EFFORTS CONTINUE, WITH BRUTAL TACTICS TOWARDS CIVILIANS THAT MAY ALREADY HAVE ALMOST COMPLETELY ALIENATED MODERATE ERITREANS. IT DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY THAT PRODUCTIVE TALKS CAN BEGIN IN THE NEAR TERM, AND IT SEEMS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT ELF ATTACKS (RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS NOW) WILL RESUME IN INTENSIFIED FORM.

B. AS THE PRINCIPAL MILITARY SUPPLIER TO THE GOE, WE CANNOT AVOID SOME INVOLVEMENT IN THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. SO FAR OUR PUBLIC POSITION HAS BEEN TENABLE: WE HAVE SOLD THE GOE SOME AMMUNITION THEY URGENTLY NEED BECAUSE OF THE FIGHTING THERE, BUT WE HAVE AT THE SAME TIME EXPRESSED STRONG HOPES FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WE HAVE PRIVATELY URGED RESTRAINT ON SOME OF THE ARAB STATES, BOTH SUPPLIERS OF THE ELF AND MODERATES. WE DO NOT ADVOCATE DIRECT US CONTACTS WITH THE ELF, BUT WHAT OTHER STEPS SHOULD WE CONSIDER? THE GOE HAS NOT SHOWN ANY INTEREST IN WHAT LITTLE WE HAVE TOLD THEM OF OUR CONTACTS WITH

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THE ARABS ON THIS SUBJECT AND SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY TO WANT TO USE US AS A CHANNEL TO THE ARABS; THEY HAVE THEIR OWN CHANNELS, AND THEY PROBABLY DOUBT THAT WE HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE ON LIBYA, SYRIA, IRAQ AND SOUTH YEMEN. BUT THE LIKELY FLARE-UP IN FIGHTING IN ERITREA WILL BRING BACK THE SAME PROBLEMS WE HAD BEFORE; FURTHER DEMANDS FROM THE GOE FOR AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT WITH WHICH TO SEEK A MILITARY SOLUTION (OR AS THE GOE WOULD SAY, TO FORCE THE ERITREANS TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE); PREDICTABLE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CONGRESS THAT COULD ENCOMPASS CHALLENGES TO OUR WHOLE MILITARY PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIA; DIRECT ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICANS (WE STILL HAVE 40 IN ASMARA INCLUDING A NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS UNIT THAT IS SAID TO BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO OUR INDIAN OCEAN FLEET) BY THE ELF, WHICH SO FAR HAS SHOWN A REMARKABLE RESTRAINT THAT MAY NOT CONTINUE IF HOSTILITIES RE-ESCALATE. IF WE ARE TO AVOID, OR EASE, FURTHER DIFFICULT DECISIONS AS THE ERITREAN PROBLEM HEATS UP AGAIN, WE AND THE DEPT NEED TO CONSIDER FURTHER STEPS, BOTH COSMETIC AND SUBSTANTIVE, TO SHOW OUR SUPPORT FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. IT WOULD NOT BE ADVISABLE FOR US TO TRY TO INVOLVE OURSELVES DIRECTLY IN ANY MEDIATORY ROLE BETWEEN THE GOE AND THE ERITREANS BECAUSE NEITHER SIDE IS LIKELY TO BE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH A US ROLE, AT LEAST IN THE NEAR TERM. HOWEVER WE WILL WANT TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO PROMOTE A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITHOUT GETTING TOO CLOSELY INVOLVED, AND WITHOUT CROSSING THE GOE'S LOW THRESHOLD OF TOLERANCE FOR WHAT THEY CONSIDER INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. PERIODIC REMINDERS TO THE HIGHER LEVELS OF THE GOE THAT WE HAVE A STRONG INTEREST IN A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ARE IN ORDER, AS ARE FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS TO MODERATE ARABS AND TO THE SUDAN. WE SOLICIT THE DEPT'S HELP IN DEVISING A FRAMEWORK AND A SCENARIO FOR SUCH EFFORTS.

C. MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THIS IS SEEN BY THE GOE AS THE CHIEF INDICATOR OF US ATTITUDES TOWARDS IT, AND CONSEQUENTLY OUR INABILITY TO SUPPLY IN A SHORT TIME FRAME A NUMBER OF ITEMS THAT THE PMAC CONSIDERS IMPORTANT (MOSTLY RELATED TO "THE SOMALI THREAT") IS A SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE SUSPICION AND FRICTION. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT WE CAN EVER PERFORM IN THIS FIELD IN A WAY TO SATISFY THE GOE, DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS, BECAUSE MAJOR ITEMS (TANKS, F-5E'S, RADARS, ETC.) ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY AND BECAUSE THE PMAC FAVORS PRESSURE TACTICS IN THIS AREA. NEVERTHELESS, THE EMBASSY FOR ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL REASONS WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE WITH WASHINGTON WAYS TO SPEED UP DELIVERIES (OUR RECENT REQUEST FOR
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RE-EXAMINATION OF F-5A AVAILABILITIES FROM IRAN FOR INSTANCE)

AND WE HOPE FOR WASHINGTON COOPERATION, WHICH OFTEN INVOLVES ASSIGNMENT OF AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH PRIORITY AMONG RIVAL CLAIMANTS (AS IN F-5E'S). AS THE ITEMS WE ARE NOW DISCUSSING ARRIVE IN ETHIOPIA IN THE COMING MONTHS, AND PROVIDING THERE IS NO SOMALI ATTACK, THE BILATERAL TENSIONS SURROUNDING THIS PROGRAM SHOULD SOMEWHAT DIMINISH. AND IT IS WORTH POINTING OUT THAT THE GOE'S SHIFT IN RECENT COMTHS FROM DEMANDS FOR GRANT MAP TO A CASH SALES BASIS IS A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT THAT HAS LIGHTENED SOME OF OUR PROBLEMS.

D. TWO SPECIFIC MILITARY ASSISTANCE ISSUES ARE LIKELY TO FACE US IN THE NEAR FUTURE:

(1) THE GOE HAS ALREADY INDICATED IT MAY WANT VERY SUBSTANTIAL NEW INCREMENTS OF AMMUNITION. IF AND WHEN THERE IS A NEW FLARE-UP OF FIGHTING IN ERITREA THE GOE WILL SURELY PRESS FOR FURTHER SALES, CONSIDERABLY BEYOND THE \$7 MILLION WE HAVE AGREED UPON. OUR RESPONSE MUST BE CONDITIONED IN SOME DEGREE BY THE GOE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ELF, BY THE DEGREE OF ITS ADHERENCE TO THE LAWS OF WAR, AND ALSO BY CONGRESSIONAL REACTIONS AT THE TIME. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW WE COULD USEFULLY TIE OUR RESPONSE CLOSELY TO STIPULATED PROGRESS TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS. THIS ISSUE OF HOW TO RESPOND TO FURTHER REQUESTS IS NOT YET BEFORE US, BUT IT WILL BE.

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(2) THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE GOE IS LOOKING ELSEWHERE FOR MILITARY SUPPLIES BUT OUR INFORMATION REMAINS FRAGMENTARY AND INADEQUATE. YUGOSLAVIA MAY ALREADY HAVE CONTRIBUTED AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT, AND HAS TAKEN A SURPRISINGLY STRONG STAND IN SUPPORT OF THE GOE AND AGAINST ARAB INTERFERENCE IN ERITREA. REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE GOE HAS HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES (OR FIRMS IN SOME COUNTRIES), PERHAPS INCLUDING THE USSR, FRANCE, AND BELGIUM (ALTHOUGH THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR DENIES THIS). IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE GOE WILL CONTINUE TO ACQUIRE SOME SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT FROM NON-US SOURCES AS IT HAS IN THE PAST (E.G., PANHARDS, DUTCH MINESWEEPER). WE HOPE THE DEPT WILL AGREE THAT WE SHOULD NOT NOW BEGIN TO TRY TO OBSTRUCT ANY AND ALL SUCH SUPPLIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHICH DO NOT SEEM TO PRESAGE AN INCREASE IN FOREIGN, ESPECIALLY COMMUNIST, ADVISORY INFLUENCE. IN THE PAST WE HAVE HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE GOE TURNING ELSEWHERE FOR ITEMS THAT WE HAVE NO WAY TO SUPPLY. IN ANY EVENT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE USG COULD PREVENT MODEST ACQUISITIONS, SHORT OF DRASTIC THREATS TO STOP OR REDUCE US ASSISTANCE WHICH EVEN IF SUCCESSFUL WOULD HARDLY RESULT IN BETTER US-GOE RELATIONS. WE SHOULD ANTICIPATE, IN ANY EVENT, THAT THE INCREASING SHIFT FROM GRANT MAP TO CASH AND CREDIT SALES WILL LEAVE THE GOE FEELING FREE TO CONTEMPLATE THIRD COUNTRY
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PROCUREMENT TRANSACTIONS.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. US PERFORMANCE, AND THE ACCEPTABILITY OF OUR PROGRAMS, IS AT A REASONABLY HIGH LEVEL AND WE EXPECT THIS TO CONTINUE. PROBLEMS WILL ARISE LATER ON, HOWEVER, IF THE GOE FOLLOWS ITS PRESENT PLANS FOR PURCHASES (MOSTLY CASH, SOME CREDIT) OF MILITARY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT THAT OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS COULD AMOUNT TO AS MUCH AS \$200 MILLION. WE WOULD THEN HAVE TO ANSWER SERIOUS AND DIFFICULT CHALLENGES BY CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AS WE SEEK TO JUSTIFY CONTINUING HIGH LEVELS OF ECONOMIC AID. BY THE DEPT'S INSTRUCTION, MISSION OFFICERS DO NOT DISCUSS WITH GOE OFFICIALS THE RELATIVE MERITS OF APPLYING SCARCE RESOURCES TO MILITARY OR DEVELOPMENTAL USES; WE SAY WHEN QUERIED THAT SUCH DECISIONS ARE FOR THE GOE TO MAKE. IN THE PRESENT UNCERTAIN STATE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE BETWEEN THE US AND GOE, THIS POSTURE IS PROBABLY WISE, BUT WE ARE NOT SURE HOW LONG IT CAN BE MAINTAINED. WE HAVE REPORTS FROM BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SECTORS OF THE GOE SHOWING RISING DISSATISFACTION WITH THE HIGH LEVEL OF PLANNED MILITARY PURCHASES IN THE LIGHT OF ENORMOUS DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS, RELATED SPENDING REQUIREMENTS, AND COMMITMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL LENDING AGENCIES. THIS IS HEALTHY SO LONG AS WE DO NOT STIMULATE IT. IN ANY EVENT, CONGRESS WILL SOONER OR LATER FORCE US TO FORMULATE AN ACCEPTABLE RATIONALE FOR THE HIGH LEVELS OF BOTH AID AND MILITARY SALES. WE SHOULD BE THINKING NOW ABOUT HOW WE WILL RESPOND TO CONGRESSIONAL

CHALLENGES. WE WOULD WANT TO EMPHASIZE THE POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AS WELL AS THE INCREASING OBSOLESCENCE OF GOE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF SOMALIA, WHICH CONTINUES TO CLAIM LARGE AREAS OF ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. RELATIVE TO ECONOMIC AID WE WOULD CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT ETHIOPIA IS STILL ONE OF THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES AND THUS FITS WELL INTO THE CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE FOR US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

F. NATIONALIZATIONS. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER UNCOMPENSATED NATIONALIZATION OF US FIRMS IS GOING TO BE A SERIOUS ISSUE. THE US HAS RELATIVELY FEW FIRMS THREATENED WITH NATIONALIZATION OR 51 PERCENT TAKEOVER -- FIVE WITH TOTAL VALUE OF ABOUT \$20 MILLION. WE HAVE CALLED GOE ATTENTION FORCEFULLY TO US LEGISLATION PRESCRIBING SEVERE AND AUTOMATIC PENALTIES IF COMPENSATION IS NOT PROMPT AND ADEQUATE. THERE ARE A FEW HOPEFUL SIGNS THAT
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THE GOE INTENDS TO IMPLEMENT ITS PROCLAMATIONS CAUTIOUSLY; ALL THE US FIRMS ARE ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS OF VARIOUS KINDS WITH THE GOE. THE EEC COUNTRIES HAVE MADE VERY STRONG AND UNITED DEMARCHES CONCERNING THEIR MUCH LARGER INVESTMENTS; THEIR PRESSURES ON THE GOE SHOULD BE USEFUL TO US AND SHOULD AID THE COMPENSATION PROSPECTS OF US FIRMS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT COULD SEVERELY STRAIN US-GOE RELATIONS IF OUR LEGISLATIVE SANCTIONS EVER HAVE TO BE TRIGGERED.

G. POSTURE AND TONE.

(1) THE DOMINANT THEME OF US ATTITUDES TOWARD THE GOE SHOULD BE STEADINESS -- DEMONSTRATING A DESIRE TO BE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL TO ETHIOPIA BUT SHOWING STRENGTH AND FIRMNESS WHERE NECESSARY. THIS IS NOT A LOVABLE REGIME, AS SEEN BY EITHER ETHIOPIANS OR AMERICANS. DIRG DECISION-MAKERS ARE HARD TO REACH, AND EVEN HARDER TO CONVINCE. BUT MANY OF THE CIVILIAN PROFESSIONALS IN THE MINISTRIES ARE HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND HAVE A CONSIDERABLE RESERVOIR OF GOODWILL TOWARD THE US AND TOWARD US PROGRAMS. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO WILL ALWAYS BE IMPORTANT IN THE RUNNING OF THE COUNTRY, AND WE WILL NEED THEIR GOODWILL. TRANSLATED INTO US ACTIONS, THIS MEANS THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AT SUBSTANTIAL LEVELS, IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY AND TRANSITION IN ETHIOPIA OUR STEADINESS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT. SOME AMERICANS HAVE CAUTIONED AGAINST OVER-IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT; THIS NEEDS TO BE WATCHED, BUT WE THINK THAT THE BUILT-IN FRICTIONS AND DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE USG THAT WILL CONTINUE TO BECOME KNOWN (E.G., OUR RESPONSE WITH A \$7 MILLION AMMUNITION SALE WHEN THE GOE WANTED \$25-30 MILLION) WILL HELP TO MITIGATE THIS PROBLEM.

(2) THERE ARE AREAS IN WHICH A VERY FIRM US STANCE WILL BE REQUIRED. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN ARBITRARY ACTS AGAINST US CITIZENS, SOMETIMES IN VIOLATION OF THE GOE'S AER TREATY OBLIGATIONS.

NORMAL AID OFFICIAL IN-COUNTRY AIR TRAVEL FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND SURVEILLANCE PURPOSES HAS RECENTLY BECOME PROCEDURALLY SO CUMBERSOME AS TO BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE, AND MAAG HAS HAD SIMILAR, BUT RELATIVELY MINOR, PROBLEMS. THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS STILL OCCASIONALLY CARRIES HOSTILE COMMENTS ABOUT UNNAMED IMPERIALISTS, ALTHOUGH THIS IS LESS FREQUENT AND LESS SEVERE THAN IT WAS SOME MONTHS AGO, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF STRONG PROTESTS BY THE EMBASSY.

(3) THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF US ACTION THAT THE GOE WILL FIND OFFENSIVE. WE FORESEE A STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION IN THE DIRG
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AS US OFFICIALS MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT ETHIOPIA IN PUBLIC HEARINGS BEFORE AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES. THE ADMINISTRATION'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS SHOULD BE TAILORED SO AS TO CAUSE AS FEW PROBLEMS AS POSSIBLE WHEN EXAMINED BY THE DIRG; THIS WILL NOT BE EASY, ESPECIALLY IF THE GOE ADOPTS POLICIES OR TAKES ACTIONS THAT ARE QUESTIONABLE OR EXTREME.

(4) IF THE GOE CHOOSES, AS WE THINK THEY MAY, TO REQUEST THE PHASING-DOWN OF THE US PRESENCE BECAUSE THEY COME TO FEEL THAT AMERICANS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM ARE AN IMPEDIMENT TO THEIR SOCIALIST RECONSTRUCTION, WE SHOULD ACQUIESCE AS GRACEFULLY AS POSSIBLE, CONSISTENT WITH OUR STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS FOR CHECKING, SURVEILLANCE, AND OTHER EMBASSY NEEDS.

10. REQUEST COMMENTS, ADVISE, AND/OR COUNTER-SUGGESTIONS.
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS05527
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750164-0944
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750562/aaaacefk.tel
Line Count: 523
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
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